

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204**

October, 2007

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2007

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Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>.

I. STATUTORY DIRECTIVE

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation directing the Commission to study the following:

- (1) Matters relating to veterans and veterans' affairs.
- (2) Matters relating to the active and reserve members of the armed forces of the United States.

The commission may study other topics assigned by the legislative council or as directed by the commission's chairman. IC 2-5-20-7.

The commission shall annually report the results of the commission's study in an electronic format under IC 5-14-6 to the general assembly before November 1. IC 2-5-20-8.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM

The Commission was assigned no additional topics of study by the legislative council or the Commission's chairman. The Commission met one time during the 2007 interim on October 9, 2007. At this meeting, the Commission received testimony as described below but did not make any findings or recommendations.

III. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Commission heard testimony from Brigadier General Omer C. Tooley of the Indiana National Guard. 975 National Guard personnel are currently deployed, and over 3,000 soldiers are preparing to deploy to Iraq by the end of the calendar year. The Indiana Army National Guard closed out fiscal year (FY) 2007 with a net increase of 1,200 recruits. The federal FY 2007 budget for the National Guard was \$377 million, an increase over previous years due to additional funding for Camp Atterbury/Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (CA/MUTC). General Tooley discussed the transformation of the Indiana Air National Guard; the Terre Haute facility is transitioning from an airfield to a distribution and support center, and the Fort Wayne facility is adding 130 personnel by FY 2009. The Indiana National Guard acquired 1,250 trailers at no cost from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for use at CA/MUTC.

Tom Applegate, Director of the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA), provided the Commission with copies of brochures detailing the benefits enacted in SEA 480-2007 and various other IDVA programs. The Military and Family Relief Fund has a balance of over \$1 million and will receive an additional \$225,000 in state matching funds by the end of FY 2008. Mr. Applegate stated that grants totaling \$22,000 have been awarded from the fund and discussed his concerns about eligibility criteria for the grants.

David Reynolds, Director of the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI), testified about the veterans' scholarship and fee remission programs that SSACI administers. SSACI has developed an application for scholarships awarded from the National Guard

scholarship extension program created by SEA 480-2007; seven individuals will begin receiving scholarships during the spring 2008 semester.

The Commission also received testimony from members of the public. Air Force Colonel (Retired) Joe Ryan of the Military Veterans' Coalition of Indiana set forth the Coalition's legislative objectives for the 2008 session, including exempting all military income from the state income tax, providing a \$1,000 combat bonus for Indiana soldiers, and renaming the Indianapolis International Airport the Weir-Cook International Airport to honor Hoosier aviator Harvey Weir Cook. Gerald Modlin, a volunteer service officer with the Vietnam Veterans of America, offered his opinion that there should a standing legislative committee focusing solely on veterans' issues.

V. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission made no findings of fact or recommendations.

WITNESS LIST

Brigadier General Omer C. Tooley, Indiana National Guard
Tom Applegate, Director, Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs
David Reynolds, Director, State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana
Air Force Colonel (Retired) Joe Ryan
Gerald Modlin